

Mr Christian Porter; Mr Paul Miles; Mr Albert Jacob; Dr Graham Jacobs; Mr Peter Abetz; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Tony O’Gorman; Mr Roger Cook; Mr John Quigley; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Troy Buswell; Dr Kim Hames

from Thornlie through to the Mandurah line. I am very hopeful that that link may become a reality at the time of the stadium being developed.

Another issue that faces Canning Vale and Southern River, in particular, is the great lack of sportsgrounds. Even though 10 per cent of land being developed has to be set aside for public open space, because Canning Vale is an old swamp area, the same as Southern River, a lot of the public open space was taken up with drainage facilities, and there simply were not enough sportsgrounds. One of the things that I was doing was trying to find some land in the area that could be used for a sportsground—and not just a sportsground but a regional sports complex. I managed to locate 66 hectares of government-owned land between the old Canning Vale tip and Jandakot Airport—it is an old sand quarry—and I had the pleasure of taking the Premier and also the Minister for Sport and Recreation out there to show them this site. With the support of the Minister for Planning, it was agreed that this would be an ideal site for a regional sporting complex, and the City of Canning and the City of Gosnells are very supportive of that. The land lies in the territory of the City of Canning, but the City of Gosnells, recognising that Canning Vale residents in the City of Gosnells will also be accessing that, is very keen to see this project developed, and could possibly even contribute to it financially. The government has shown its commitment to that project by making funding available for a feasibility study more than a year ago. That is currently in progress, and in the last state budget \$1 million was set aside for preliminary works to be done, therefore showing the government’s commitment to making this project a reality.

My electorate is also very much a new suburban area. Therefore, there are very many young families. Our primary schools are all very new, so we do not have any issues with old buildings or anything like that, but we have very large primary schools. For example, Campbell Primary School now has more than 1 000 students enrolled. Schools form the hubs within our community. Those schools have an excellent reputation. One of the things I have been able to help with is the procuring of the LED 40-kilometre signs for our schools. By the time school goes back next year, every school in my electorate that is on a major road will have LED lights. In fact, only one school will not have LED lights, and that is partly because it is on a road that is not as busy.

In terms of education, my electorate has seen a program developed for talented students in primary schools—that is based at Caladenia Primary School. I believe that program certainly deserves continued support. It is making an excellent contribution towards getting the very best of opportunities for our young people. Most of our schools are independent public schools. The community has really jumped at that opportunity. The school boards seem to be functioning very well and providing really good value for the education dollars being spent in my area.

In concluding, I would like to say that it has been a real pleasure to get to know so many of the people who make up my community and to serve them as the member of Parliament for the electorate of Southern River. It has been a pleasure to interact with so many people and have the opportunities to help them. As the member for Ocean Reef, I think, put it, on 9 March the people will make a decision on who will represent them. I have every hope that they will have been encouraged by what I have been able to achieve for them and that they will give me the opportunity to continue to serve them for another four years, and perhaps another four years after that. With that, I think I can conclude and thank the various ministers who have made possible the progress that has been made in my electorate in helping to make Southern River a great place to live

MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park) [8.15 pm]: I rise finally to speak on the Loan Bill 2012. I am the lead speaker for the opposition. Although the bill has been around for quite some time, a combination of pairs and, I guess, ensuring that we had the Loan Bill for the valedictories meant that it has taken some time for me to finally get to my feet and speak on the Loan Bill. I want to start by acknowledging the valedictory speech of the member for Bateman. He made some very kind reflections upon me during his speech. As many people know, the member for Bateman and I go back a long way. We went through law school and then practised law together at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for a short spell. I wish the member for Bateman all the very best in his transition to the federal Parliament. I am glad that he did not go on to offer the analysis of why I am perhaps similar to the Premier. That is one analysis that I am not sure I am willing to hear.

Dr A.D. Buti: Or the many parties you went to together.

Mr B.S. WYATT: We do not need to reflect on those things, member for Armadale, other than to say that the member for Bateman and I spent many hours studying hard together in the library at the University of Western Australia law school.

This is, of course, the second loan bill of the government, which makes a total of \$13.3 billion in borrowings for the general government sector. That is not bad for one term, two loan bills—the first one in 2009 for \$8.316 billion, and now the Loan Bill we are debating tonight for \$5 billion. I acknowledge the Treasury officials who provided the opposition with a briefing. They gave us the loan bills since 1987, and the largest loan

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bill between 1987 and 2009 was the one in 1991 for \$390 million. Then, in 2009, there was the bill for \$8.3 billion, and now we have the bill for \$5 billion, which, as anybody would know, is an extraordinary amount of money to borrow in one term of government. Of the \$8.3 billion in the 2009 bill, some \$1 billion that was authorised to be borrowed for the 2012–13 financial year is still outstanding, with another \$3 billion being authorised by this bill for the 2012–13 financial year. That is an extraordinary amount of money by any stretch of the imagination. We must bear in mind also some of the comments made by the Treasurer when he was on this side of the house. On 18 March 2008, the current Treasurer, the member for Vasse, made this point —

In the 2004-05 budget, the government predicted that three years into the forward estimates—that is, by 2006-07—it would be spending \$13.2 billion, but it actually spent almost \$15.2 billion. That is a massive increase in recurrent expenditure in the out years and a clear indication that recurrent expenditure management is not being exercised properly.

Back then in 2008, just before the member for Vasse became Treasurer, he was complaining about spending beyond the budget. In fact, he regularly got to his feet in this place and attacked the Labor government about growth in recurrent spending, which, from memory, over the eight years of the Gallop–Carpenter governments averaged somewhere between seven and eight per cent. What we have seen over the past four years from this government is average expenditure growth in the general government sector of 10 per cent. An amount of \$2 billion has been spent outside of the budget process. So the member for Vasse, as Treasurer, in applying his own standards to the management of this government, is certainly not managing recurrent expenditure even remotely competently.

One other thing that I would note is that again in 2008, on 13 May, the Treasurer and member for Vasse made this point —

State debt will be \$11.4 billion in four years’ time despite the fact that the state has never enjoyed more income, particularly through state taxes and royalties.

So, back then, the Treasurer was railing against the fact that state debt would get to \$11.4 billion by 2011–12. What did state debt ultimately get to under this government? It got to \$15.1 billion. The Treasurer made the point that at a state debt level of \$11.4 billion—that is what he was worried about at that time—the state’s AAA credit rating could slip away. We now know that state debt ultimately got to \$15.1 billion—in fact, nearly \$15.2 billion—and is now well on its way to \$23 billion. That is why the state is being given a warning shot about its AAA credit rating. It is not just the overly high reliance on royalties that our state government now faces. It is also expense growth that is averaging 10 per cent every year. Over the life of this government—the four years of this government—\$2 billion has been spent outside the budget process. That is \$2 billion that was not budgeted for and that ultimately the government spent.

I want to spend a couple of minutes reflecting on the government’s the Bigger Picture campaign. I think it is worth noting the Bigger Picture campaign. I say that particularly in light of the fact that the Premier himself has turned out to be quite a monarchist with the naming of Elizabeth Quay.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Without consulting the people of Western Australia.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Yes, without consulting the people of Western Australia. Thank you, member for Girrawheen. The Premier just decided that Elizabeth Quay is a wonderful name for what is undoubtedly one of the state’s most significant pieces of real estate—undoubtedly. He thought, “It’s a great idea, because the Queen came out here and watched a lot of people have a snagger, so let’s name the place after her”—with no consultation. This is the apparent republican, I dare say monarchist. I dare say that the Premier’s conversion to faith in the monarchy drove his naming of the Bigger Picture. When members walk into the foyer of Parliament House, they no doubt will pass a poster. There is a poster down there. I have not stolen the poster. I have obtained a copy of this poster. What is the name of it, member for Girrawheen? It is at the bottom.

Ms M.M. Quirk: It is the *Big Picture!*

Mr B.S. WYATT: The *Big Picture!* I think what has happened is that the Premier has wandered into Parliament House and thought, “I like that painting.” The reason he likes that painting is that standing front and centre is His Royal Highness the Duke of York and Cornwall, later to become King George IV. So the Premier thought, “I quite like that. I like the idea of standing there before the masses.” This is, by the way, for the benefit of members here, a picture of the first sitting of the commonwealth Parliament, when the Duke of York and Cornwall, who ultimately became King George IV, came out and addressed very significant members of the Australian community at the time. What is famous about this painting by Tom Roberts is that the people in the front of the painting have all been drawn so that we can identify who they are. Then, off in the distance, there is just a vague mass of people. I looked at that, and I thought no doubt the Premier had an image of himself being

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there! There he is! The people we can see and identify—no doubt members of the cabinet and members of the 500 Club—are there, as the Premier gets up on the stadium at Elizabeth Quay, and off in the distance, just a blur, a figment of the imagination, are the people of the suburbs of Perth. There they are, vaguely aware of Elizabeth Quay, off in the distance, causing them no end of problems with their traffic, vaguely aware, but knowing full well that “His Royal Highness the Duke of Cottesloe” is doing well by them. No doubt that is what the Premier drew his inspiration from, knowing full well that he would love to be a monarch himself.

So when I look at the advertisement “It’s all Part of the Bigger Picture”, I notice that we have in the foreground the CBD, very much in focus, very much the attention of the government, and then off in the distance, blurred, out of sight, out of mind, out there somewhere, are the suburbs of Perth, yet again being ignored and being neglected, because the Premier wants, like King George IV back in 1901, to be standing before the members of the Liberal Party and the 500 Club, with them all expressing delight in what the Premier has given to them at Elizabeth Quay.

I am not surprised that Hon Gary Gray, the federal member for Brand, expressed some discontent regarding this advertisement and the fact that nowhere on this advertisement is there any mention of the fact that some significant federal money is coming into these projects. The federal member for Brand and the federal government have made some points. Fiona Stanley Hospital had some \$255 million go into the rehabilitation centre. I note also Gateway WA. That is an interesting project. I like Gateway WA, because that is 70 per cent funded by the federal government. There is an interesting little quirk —

Ms M.M. Quirk: Excuse me—as opposed to boring me!

Mr B.S. WYATT: My apologies to the member for Girrawheen!

Ms M.M. Quirk: That’s all right!

Mr B.S. WYATT: There is an interesting little twist to Gateway WA, because there it is, on the ad “It’s all Part of the Bigger Picture”, 70 per cent funded—\$700 million—by the federal government. The interesting twist is that that \$700 million will come from the minerals resource rent tax. What is happening with that tax? The Premier is spending taxpayers’ money challenging the validity of the mining tax. The Premier has to address this issue. In the event that the Premier is successful in that challenge, how will the government fund that \$700 million? Will it do what Mr Hockey suggests and use road tolls for it? How will that be funded in the event that the Premier is successful in his High Court challenge to the mining tax? Of course the Perth City Link project had some \$230 million of commonwealth funding. The light rail is, of course, completely subject to federal funding. I note that for the Perth stadium, money is being sought from the federal government. So I am not surprised that there was some discontent from the federal member for Brand, Hon Gary Gray, and the federal government in respect of that advertising campaign.

I also want to—I have gone through this before—reflect on some of the statements that were made by the member for Cottesloe regarding debt before he became Premier. These are very interesting statements. In August 1991, during a substantial debate in respect of the increasing debt in Western Australia, the member for Cottesloe and now Premier made a number of points. The first point he made was this —

There are many other unknown contingent liabilities that will impact on debt and potential future debt. For example, it is estimated that there is a \$3.9 billion unfunded superannuation liability for Government employees. It has been a longstanding practice not to fund that superannuation liability. However, the State needs to accept that responsibility and start to fund and manage that liability as it is growing rapidly. An amount of \$3.9 billion is immense. It is a growing liability which a responsible financial enterprise, which this State should be, would bring under control.

The Premier described \$3.9 billion as immense and in 1991, the Premier demanded that, as a responsible financial enterprise, the state should bring that amount under control. The amount shown during budget estimates this year is about \$8 billion. I am yet to see the Premier make any attempt to bring that under control or, at the very least, address what the Premier described as “an immense liability”. I will read out one of the more interesting comments in 2003 by the Premier, when he was Leader of the Opposition, regarding debt. He said —

... what really matters is how much is owed, when it will be paid back and the interest bill. That is the amount written on the cheque and the amount this State owes the bank.

I compare those words said in 2003 with a statement he made on 4 September 2010 regarding debt when he said —

“In reality you don’t have to pay back the debt, what you have to do is make sure the debt is (under) control and as a guide I’m intending keeping our total level of net debt below \$20 billion.”

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There are a couple of issues here. One is his initial concern that what matters is how much is owed, when it will be paid back and the interest bill, versus his then decision that it does not matter because we do not have to pay back the debt; all we need to do is make sure we keep it under \$20 billion. That is very different from what the now Treasurer, the member for Vasse, said in 2008 about the horrendous threat to the AAA rating that a debt level of \$11.4 billion would impose on the state’s finances. The Premier is now saying that it no longer matters what the debt is because, ultimately, we do not have to pay it back. That is why it is very easy for the government to continue to bring loan bills before the Parliament. As I said, this is the second of this government’s loan bills. The amount of \$8.3 billion was the first in 2009 and now there is another \$5 billion in 2012, bearing in mind that, since 1987, the largest amount of borrowing previously sought for authorisation was \$390 million. This has been extraordinary growth in the state’s debt position. As the member for Belmont made clear during his excellent valedictory speech today, the government is effectively taking on the entire financial capacity of this Parliament and probably the next two Parliaments. It is driven by a Premier who now has a position on debt that, ultimately, we do not have to pay it back and we have to keep it under \$20 billion, bearing in mind the \$20 billion cap has, obviously, since been removed.

There has been some debate over the past day or two regarding this government’s broken promises. It is no surprise, I guess, as we move towards the last day or two of this Parliament—or potentially another day a little later in the year—that the opposition, indeed the people of Western Australia, will start focusing on the government’s record. I think that is very reasonable. I think what was shown in the 2008 election, as the people of Ellenbrook are very well aware, is that this is a government that will literally say anything to anyone to get elected, with ultimately no real intent to deliver on those commitments. In a radio interview on 3 September this year concerning a number of different things, especially an Ellenbrook train line, we heard the Treasurer say that the government broke its commitment regarding Ellenbrook because the former government did not do the policy work for it. But he then went on to explain in an interview in September with Geoff Hutchison—it might have been John McGlue—that because there was no analysis of demand, no analysis of patronage, “the reality is that when you did that, when we conducted that analysis, the investment did not stack up.” That is why the Treasurer decided the people of Ellenbrook no longer deserved their rail line. It is, of course, in stark contrast to what he is saying about the new Busselton airport. He said that he believed that project had to be considered regardless of whether there was an immediate demand from international carriers —

“If we don’t build it then they certainly won’t fly here,” Mr Buswell said.

...

“As a government you’ve got to have a broader perspective on this type of project,”

Mr P.B. Watson: It is to take all those extra people coming to Albany for the one or two who get off at Busselton.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Yes, I had to make a stop at Busselton on the way from Albany.

Mr T.R. Buswell: What day of the week was that?

Mr B.S. WYATT: It was a night-time flight. Why was I down there, Watto?

Mr P.B. Watson: Sorry; I can’t remember.

Mr B.S. WYATT: It was a night-time flight back and we had to stop at Busselton. One thing I remember quite clearly is that the fellow in front of me jumped up, got his bag and walked off the plane, only to scurry back on about five minutes later when he realised he was not in Perth. The announcement that we were landing in Busselton was not terribly clear.

Mr P.B. Watson: They won’t tell us how many there are either.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Is that right?

Mr P.B. Watson: They don’t keep those stats.

Mr B.S. WYATT: It is soon to be the \$100 million upgraded airport. Interestingly, this was confirmed again by the Treasurer on 2 November when he was reported in the *Busselton Dunsborough Times* as follows —

Vasse MLA Troy Buswell told the *Times* in terms of transport infrastructure in the South West, the Busselton Airport and Bunbury Port were the State Government’s highest priorities.

They are the state’s highest priorities. It will cost \$100 million, but it does not matter if there is no demand.

Mr T.R. Buswell: In the south west.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Yes; I said the south west; the minister was not listening. I quoted him as saying “south west”.

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Mr T.R. Buswell: You said “highest priorities”.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I will read it again —

Vasse MLA Troy Buswell told the *Times* in terms of transport infrastructure in the South West, the Busselton Airport and Bunbury Port were the State Government’s highest priorities.

They are this government’s highest priorities for the south west—a \$100 million airport that he will build apparently, regardless of whether there is any demand or requirement for it. He also said the \$623 million Bunbury port is one of the highest priorities. I made a quick check and found that the number of media statements in which the government said, “This is our highest priority” is quite extraordinary. The government’s rhetoric seems to be that everything is its highest priority, and that, of course, means that nothing is its highest priority. But it is good to know that \$100 million is still committed to the Busselton airport, despite the fact there does not seem to be a demand, but that does not matter anyway, and, of course, the people of Bunbury are delighted that the \$623 million —

Mr T.R. Buswell: You don’t support it then?

Mr B.S. WYATT: I am talking about what the Treasurer is committing to. We are talking about debt, Treasurer, and I am talking about things that have not been brought to book. There are quite a lot. The process by which the government has gone about making policy and announcing policy is, indeed, interesting. One of the more recent examples concerned a proposed Midland university. As I was when I was on holiday in Busselton and staggered out to get a copy of the *Busselton Dunsborough Times* to find on the front page that the Treasurer was committing \$100 million to his airport, I was somewhat surprised again just two weeks ago, on 27 October, when the Premier was reported in the *Echo* as visiting Midland and making a number of commitments. The first—this will sound familiar to people here in light of the priority comments I have just made—was that the Perth–Darwin highway will be the next project undertaken within the metropolitan area. But, interestingly, he said the following —

“I’ve been talking with universities over the past few months about what can be provided in this area and the State—in principle—is prepared to fund the construction of a university campus.”

The quote goes on —

“But [we] will be looking to the universities to run the campus and I hope that over the next month or so we can get to, I guess, a landing point on how that will be done.”

Mr A.P. O’Gorman: How much is that?

Mr B.S. WYATT: I have no idea. I am curious that the state government is now entering into the realm of constructing universities.

Mr A.P. O’Gorman: I can tell you that over the past five to six years, Edith Cowan University has built \$120 million worth of buildings.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I did not say that. It will get away cheap at \$120 million.

Mr A.P. O’Gorman: That is just a couple of the buildings that it has built over the past five to 10 years.

Mr B.S. WYATT: As members can imagine, the opposition is finding it difficult to cost that particular commitment by the Premier. But he made that point and said that in the next month we would hear from him. I was curious about that and members will recall earlier last week I asked the Treasurer about the costing. The Treasurer, of course, appeared to be uncertain about that particular commitment. The *Echo* then decided to pursue this apparent commitment, which was then not a commitment, and ran another story regarding the Midland university on 10 November, which states —

... a spokesperson for the Premier said Mr Barnett only spoke in general terms about what was needed in Midland.

“He has no further comment at this stage,” the spokesperson said.

Mr P.B. Watson: He is an emperor. How can it be true?

Mr B.S. WYATT: I do not understand when in general terms the Premier says that the state is prepared to fund the construction of a university campus. That seems to me to be fairly uncertain but when challenged and asked to cost the particular commitment he says, “Well, it was only a general comment. I am not committed to that at all.” While he was there, it was a busy time for the Premier. He noted that the Midland railway station needed some money spent on it and he said —

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“Having driven past it—which was what I needed to do to be convinced that [train station] is clearly inadequate for the growing population, so that will be looked at too,” ...

Forgetting the fact that he had already taken some \$22 million out of the budget a couple of years ago to go into a new Midland station, he has now decided, “Well, I have driven past it. I now know we need a new one.” Interestingly, I thought, “Well, that is another \$20-odd million in commitments there”, but thankfully the cost of this has been clarified by Hon Alyssa Hayden who, in the *Community News* of 9 November, made the point —

... the cost of a new station alone would double the former funding and would need major infrastructure works alongside it for the project to be possible.

She went on to make this point —

“In 2011 a quantity surveyor estimated to extend the railway to Cale Street and build a new station was \$40 million,” she said. “This does not include vital infrastructure such as the Lloyd Street extension, \$55.7 million, that is a necessity if the Midland train station is to be extended.”

So it will cost \$55.7 million for the Midland train station, as per the commitment by the Premier, but now we do not know because subsequently speaking in general terms, the commitment he made and reported on 27 October is now spoken about only in general terms by the Premier. Ms Hayden went on, usefully I think and quite accurately, to outline how this government goes about costing, funding and delivering its commitment. Ms Hayden said —

... she believed current budgets did not restrict chances for the project.

“In reference to money not currently being identified in the budget, this will have no impact on our campaign to have the Midland train station to better suit the Midland region,” ...

It does not matter whether there is any money there; that is irrelevant. There is no intent to get money there—no interest whatsoever. The government will campaign on this just like the member for Swan Hills when he campaigned on his aircraft carrier, and just like the Premier who is campaigning on his Midland university.

I have already made some points regarding the Gateway WA project. I will now make some comments about the MAX light rail. This was another wonderful example of how the government has gone about costing its own commitments. We recall that the government had to rush out its announcement for MAX. I remember watching it on television and thinking, “The Treasurer is not happy being out there today.” I had a sneaking suspicion that this was being rushed out because I know that the Bigger Picture ads were about to start and I was pretty sure that the light rail project would be in that ad. The government had to rush it out on that last Sunday before the ads started and, sure enough, there we saw MAX and, let us not forget, another project that the state government is looking to the federal government to fund. I thought, how much is this going to cost —

Mr T.R. Buswell: They already are funding it.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The government has spent that money five times over, Treasurer. Stop allocating it. I am sick of it. It keeps getting allocated. Every time there is another project, it is allocated. I thought that if the government spent one dollar somewhere, it could not spend it anywhere else. This Treasurer has found this tree somewhere. He keeps spending the same money. I look forward to seeing how that money ends up actually being spent.

Going back to that interview, the Treasurer had gone through a few transcripts over the previous few weeks, mainly with the Leader of the Opposition and what he had been saying on radio. On 3 September on 720 ABC, as members would appreciate, the media were interested to know how the state would pay for it and what it would cost. The first question was, “How are you going to pay for it?” The Treasurer said —

It’ll be paid for by—I’m assuming, or I imagine ...

The next question was has the Cabinet endorsed it? He said, “I don’t know”. “How long will it take?” He said, “12 to 18 months I’d imagine.” “Where will it come from?” Again from that money he keeps allocating—the Nation Building 2 projects money. He said —

... we’ll sit down with the Cth, I’d imagine ...

It is the John Lennon project; everything is “imagined”. At some point this imagining will have to crystallise into reality. How much will it cost and where will the money come from? Finally, when the journalist asked, “What is it going to cost?” the response was —

I think it will be over a billion dollars or at least a billion dollars or more than a billion dollars ...

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That is just wonderful. That is what we call commitment undercooked and underdone simply because there is a bunch of taxpayer-funded political advertising on the way and so out roll the commitments and the Treasurer imagining everything it could be—the John Lennon project—he had some vague idea of the MAX light rail project costing about a billion dollars or around a billion dollars, and the closest he has been willing to get is around northwards of a billion dollars. So the Treasurer cannot come in here and complain about the opposition costings when this is what the government of the day has been doing.

The Premier has got form; we know he has form. Who can forget the Langoulant letter of 23 June 1998 written to Premier Court. It is infamous on the Liberal side of politics and famous on the Labor side of politics. I will read two short paragraphs of the letter —

I have expressed my concern to you on a number of occasions about the disturbing trend of Cabinet and individual Ministers to embark upon expenditure proposals out of context with the budget. This trend manifests itself in the following ways:

There are a lot of bullet points here but I will focus on one —

- Individual Ministers proposing, and Cabinet endorsing, expenditure proposals with no regard to the state of the overall budget and with no examination or consideration of existing budgetary capacity within a portfolio. Examples include ...

He goes through a few but interestingly one refers to —

... the Education Minister’s announcements on matters such as reduced class sizes which are not funded.

Of course the Minister for Education was none other than the Premier today, the member for Cottesloe. So the Premier has fallen. He was doing it back under the Court government. The then Under Treasurer John Langoulant caught him out. Members can imagine the frustration of an Under Treasurer having to write a letter like this to the Premier and Treasurer of the day, Richard Court, and the frustration he must have felt with individual ministers wandering around making commitments out of context with the budget—commitments that were not funded. I think the people of Midland certainly will be wondering exactly what is the future of the Midland university and the MAX light rail. It goes to show that the Premier’s past performance, as identified by Mr Langoulant, has not changed; if anything, it has gotten worse. We can look at the debt growth and compare it with the comments made by the member for Vasse back in 2008 when he said in *Hansard* —

State debt will be \$11.4 billion in four years’ time ...

And he said —

... the state’s AAA credit rating could slip away.

Remember those sweet days and heady times when we had more money? Now we are looking down the barrel of \$23 billion and already a warning shot has been fired across the bow about this state’s AAA credit rating.

I will now turn to—this was the subject of question time today—a question I asked the Premier about the National Party and Liberal Party commitments. There have been a number of times now when commitments have been made by the National Party that do not see fulsome endorsement from the Premier; if anything, they have received lukewarm endorsement from the Premier. That is the reason I asked the question today about this \$150 million goldfields fund announced by the Leader of the National Party at its election launch back in August. A question was asked in the upper house about whether it was something that the Liberal–National government would be doing. The answer from Hon Norman Moore was hardly a ringing endorsement. I quote —

The announcements are National Party commitments that they would seek to implement in government after the next election.

So I do not think the people of the goldfields can yet run around in joy, in the event the Liberal–National government is returned, that the goldfields fund will indeed be delivered. Usefully, the debate then continued. That question was asked on 21 August, and then on 23 August, as members would appreciate, this caught the interest of the opposition. Hon Norman Moore entered into some discussion with Hon Ken Travers regarding this issue, and Hon Norman Moore stated —

If the Liberal Party goes to the election promising something that cannot be delivered because of some alliance arrangements, then that will be the case.

Think about that for a second —

If the Liberal Party goes to the election promising something that cannot be delivered because of some alliance arrangements, then that will be the case.

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The Liberal Party and the National Party need to explain what is negotiable and what is not negotiable. What will be delivered for sure if the coalition is returned? The attitude is: “Well, that is non-core, we can negotiate that one away.” The reason I asked that, Madam — again, I apologise, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Victoria Park, I am starting to get confused!

Mr B.S. WYATT: I am easily confused this time of night, but I am reading through the finances of this government—don’t you worry about that!

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will give one example for the reason I ask these questions. I actually could give a couple but I will start with this one. In a media release of 30 October 2012 the Liberal Party released its principles for royalties for regions, and they sound a lot like the principles released by the Labor Party some time before that. But, interestingly, one of those principles regarding royalties for regions is this —

Significant investment in building new country roads and upgrading existing roads, ...

Let us reflect on what the Leader of the National Party and Minister for Regional Development, the person in charge of the spending of royalties for regions, has said about using royalties for regions for roads. An article in *The Sunday Times* on 21 June 2009, in response to RAC concerns that money was not being spent on fixing roads, states —

But in a letter to RAC member advocacy manager Matt Brown this week, Mr Grylls rejected the proposal, ...

The quote from Mr Grylls is —

“Royalties for Regions has been established to supplement—not supplant—the existing provision of basic, essential infrastructure and services across WA,” he said.

It was outside the objectives of the royalties for regions program to spend royalties for regions money on roads.

Again, on 1 July 2009, a report on Mr Grylls in the *Manjimup–Bridgetown Times* states —

WA National Party leader Brendon Grylls said while regional road network safety was a priority, there were only so many projects the Royalties for Regions budget could accommodate.

Again, on 25 June 2009, a report in the *Countryman* states —

Regional Development Minister Brendon Grylls said royalties for Regions was not an appropriate funding source for road upgrades.

Again, on 23 June 2009, a report in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* states —

Minister for Regional Development Brendon Grylls said responsibility for road safety was clearly defined within all levels of Government and Royalties for Regions was not an appropriate funding vehicle.

We therefore know, because Hon Norman Moore says so, that any Liberal Party commitment is negotiable, and therefore any National Party commitment is negotiable in the event that the coalition is reformed. We know that the National Party will not be spending any royalties for regions money on roads if it intends to be consistent with dozens of comments made by the Leader of the National Party. When Liberal Party members say that they will spend royalties for regions money on roads, National Party members need to ask, “Is this negotiable? Will this be a core road or will this be a non-core road? Will we see this road delivered or not?” It is clear—Hon Norman Moore has made it clear—that all commitments are up for negotiation. The Liberal Party’s attitude is, “Do not believe in them until the coalition is formed and then we will tell you what it is we are going to do.”

I will come back to the goldfields fund. When it was announced at the National Party campaign lunch, the question was then put to the Premier, as we would expect, by Kara Vickery of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, and she reported on 25 August this year —

Whether the Goldfields will get the proposed fund is still to be determined, with Premier Colin Barnett this week refusing to comment on whether the Liberals would match the WA Nationals’ election promise.

Interestingly, it certainly raised the ire of the member for Eyre, Dr Graham Jacobs, who described the fund in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of 21 August 2012 as nothing more than a pre-election, vote-buying exercise. Clearly we are already seeing the National Party making commitments that who knows when will be delivered. That is because ultimately we do not know. It is worth noting in the debate regarding the tier 3 rail what the Leader of the National Party actually said back in August 2008, just prior to the election. An article in the *Countryman* states —

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WA Nationals leader Brendon Grylls said the party believed the State component of the Rail Rescue package should be funded through its Royalties for Regions policy.

“It’s important infrastructure that needs to be supported,” Mr Grylls said.

...

“My discussions with the Federal Government are (that) they understand the importance of it and they would like to fund it but they are going to need a commitment from the State Government. If we have an influence over that we would obviously be prioritising the grain rail network above the Perth railway extension to Butler.”

We know that never happened. I assume that this was one of those things that Hon Norman Moore said, “Well, that’s subject to negotiation.” I am assuming that is what happened there. We saw when the Treasurer made his announcement about the tier 3 rail. Mr Buswell would not comment on Mr Grylls’ request but reiterated that he did not support a further economic review. That is it—there was no more money coming. The Leader of the National Party made the point quite clearly back in 2008 when he said, “If we have an influence”. Does the National Party have influence? It is the only part of the government with any money. He said that the National Party would ensure that tier 3 rail gets prioritised over the Butler extension. That is what he said, and ultimately he negotiated that away. He cut that away. He was no longer interested.

That is why we over here on this side of the chamber are interested in which commitments are negotiable and which commitments are not. By no stretch of the imagination is Hon Norman Moore an inexperienced member of Parliament—no way at all. He knows that when he says something, it is—I dare say particularly when he is speaking for the Liberal Party—correct.

Mr P. Papalia: Calculated.

Mr B.S. WYATT: It is calculated. Hon Norman Moore knows what he is saying. His was not an off-the-cuff comment from a very experienced member of Parliament when he said, and I will quote again —

If the Liberal Party goes to the election promising something that cannot be delivered because of some alliance arrangements, then that will be the case.

That will be the case. Any person in regional Western Australia will have to ask that question when a commitment is made regarding royalties for regions. They will then have to ask the questions: Is this a negotiable commitment? Is it something that we may or may not see? Is it a priority commitment or, as Hon Norman Moore said, will we see that particular commitment disappear?

I have gone longer than I intended to, and I want to move on to the Western Australian Auditor General’s report on major capital projects. This was an interesting document. The reason I found it an interesting document is what it showed about the management of capital works projects under this government. WA has heard at length the critique by the Treasurer about Perth Arena. That, apparently, was not a change in scope; it was just a blowout. Let us not forget what the Treasurer said back on 10 March 2010 —

We came into power and said, “Give us a list of the top 20 projects, how much they cost and when they will be finished.”

Then he went on to make the point that it had not been done before: why had the Labor Government not done it? Luckily, as the Treasurer said —

There are new people in charge of capital works in this state. We will learn from these lessons. Those opposite, particularly the member for Midland, should hang their heads in shame.

Then the Auditor General picked 20 non-residential capital works projects. He did exactly what the Treasurer said he did when he first got elected to the government benches in 2008. The Auditor General found that the expected cost variance of the 20 sampled non-residential building projects was 114 per cent above their original approved budget. There has to be, and there should be, some element of responsibility from this government. They have been in power for over four years. As the Treasurer said, he told us all in Parliament, “I went and I said to the bureaucrats: give me your top 20 projects. We’re in charge now. We’ll fix up this mess.” Yet four years later, the Auditor General finds a 114 per cent variance above the original approved budget. That is a reflection on the government. That is why we are seeing for the second time in the life of this government a Loan Bill.

The debate on the Loan Bill 2009 was extraordinary, and \$8.3 billion was authorised to be borrowed in 2009. I thought at the time that surely this will see us through for quite some time, bearing in mind that since 1987 the largest amount authorised was \$390 million—yet here we are in the dying days of the parliamentary session authorising another \$5 billion. Ultimately, the Premier is wrong. He is wrong because the debt will have to be

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repaid. I admit that it is probably not going to be repaid until well after he has gone from this place. But he was correct when in debate in 1991, when he was then concerned about the growing unfunded superannuation liability, he said, “Well, \$3.9 billion is immense! We’ve got to do something about that.” In 2008, the Treasurer made the point that this government was going to reduce debt to \$11.4 billion, and even then the AAA credit rating could slip away at that level. Yet, even with extraordinary growth in royalty revenue, we have seen those debt figures that the Treasurer railed against when debt was going to get to \$11.4 billion by 2011–12 actually get to \$15.2 billion, and we are steaming away to \$23 billion in debt. That is why we have seen the warning shot from Standard and Poor’s concerning Western Australia’s AAA credit rating.

Before I conclude I want to have a quick look in my electorate, which members will be delighted to know. A number of events have taken place in my electorate, and I want to thank a few people. In Bentley, the Brownlie Towers precinct is a very important part of my electorate. When Hon Tom Stephens was housing minister and the then member for Victoria Park, Hon Geoff Gallop, was Premier, the Labor government funded an upgrade at Brownlie Towers. They increased security and changed the policy on the people living at Brownlie Towers so that children were not living there. Brownlie Towers is not a place for small children; it is a high-rise apartment block with small apartments, and small children should never have been there. What we have seen over time is that the antisocial behaviour around Brownlie Towers has reduced fundamentally. The number of police attendances at Brownlie Towers has reduced incredibly. It is becoming a much better place to live. I am not saying that it is perfect yet, but it is becoming a much better place to live. Just the other week we finally saw the continuation of Geoff Gallop’s vision for Bentley. The Brownlie precinct in Bentley was built at a time when there were lots of cul-de-sacs, and we know now that is not an appropriate way to plan.

Dr K.D. Hames: I thought it was the new living program at Brownlie Towers.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The Deputy Premier might be talking about Queens Park.

The Brownlie precinct development had been delayed. I was briefed in 2008–09 when it was about to happen, but there were delays. I have just seen it kick off again, and we will see a large number of those old public houses and Homeswest apartments demolished—they needed to be demolished; and we will see those roads punched through to remove the dead-ends and cul-de-sacs, and by working with the City of Canning I am delighted that the government has eventually got around to continue with that development to create a much better area for Bentley. Rather than 100 per cent public housing in this area, we will see that reduced to a much more sustainable level that will also create a much more secure environment for the people of Bentley. I know that the people living around the Brownlie Towers precinct are delighted to finally see some movement with that precinct.

In Bentley at Brownlie Towers we have an extraordinarily strong community. We have a lot of people with incredibly diverse backgrounds, including many people from overseas who have come from very challenging backgrounds. A community garden has been created, led by Sue Crock, who has done a wonderful job with the Bentley community garden. It can be followed online in a documentary by SBS called *Harvest*. They have done eight webisodes on the development of the community garden, and the activity on the Facebook site is extraordinary. The launch of the webisode at the community hall at the base of Brownlie Towers had a huge turnout of people; it was brilliant. I still remember the launch of the community garden. There was a massive turnout of people committed to Brownlie Towers and making sure that the Bentley precinct becomes a much safer place and a place where people want to live. Around Bentley, we have good public transport and a great school, so there is a keen desire to see Brownlie Towers and the Bentley area develop well.

This year was also the third year of my Homeless Community Connect project. This project was started in 2010. The member for Gosnells was kind enough to come along to have a look at what we are doing with community connect. Back in 2009, there were a number of complaints from businesses on my part of the Albany Highway strip about the increasing level of homelessness, because people were bothering patrons, asking for money and causing concern and there were complaints from the patrons. What do we do? Victoria Park is an inner city area and it has a train line, Bentley Hospital and a lot of NGOs that focus around homelessness, so we do get a lot of homeless people. Rather than simply push people out to the electorates of Gosnells and Cannington, and as these people are generally from my area, what could we do to help them? We sat down—initially it was a small group of about a dozen people—and we decided to start a homeless community connect based on the City of Perth’s homeless connect. This has become huge. It is extraordinary how quickly it has grown. It is our third year now, and I want to mention the Riverview Community Services. In a second, Riverside will roll out a hundred volunteers to work all day from dawn to dusk when required. They have been fantastic. This year over 60 service providers gathered at G.O. Edwards Park at Burswood. The Riverview Church and Riverview Community Services looks out onto it and we can have services inside as well as in the park; and the member for Gosnells would have seen all of that. Over 600 people came through on that day. It does not go all day, just for a few hours, but 600 people came through. I saw a great situation, which happened more than once, but I saw what

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happened in the case of one homeless person who came in. As we know, homeless people do not have records, driver’s licences or bank cards. He came in and said that he did not have identification. We had someone from Births, Deaths and Marriages there, so we could get a birth certificate and provide this person with identification; he then went to the Commonwealth Bank, which came on board for the first time this year, which opened an account for him, and then he went to Centrelink and had money deposited into his account before he had even left. Having that situation in which we could connect people to the relevant service providers was fantastic. Other service providers included mobile GPs and the National Dental Foundation. In the three years of Homeless Community Connect, they have come every year and pulled teeth nonstop—not just pulled teeth, but they do pull a lot of teeth! Homelessness can cause significant problems with people’s teeth. Australian Podiatry come, and free haircuts were provided by JTs hair stylists, and the Body Shop was there; and indeed for the first time the government provided a cash donation of \$2 000. It is growing in size and in its impact on the community. That is being done out of my office with volunteers from Riverview Community Services. That is bringing people together, and hopefully we are moving people who are either living rough or vulnerable to losing their accommodation to ensure that they are connected up so that we can keep them in their houses.

Returning to the Loan Bill, when expense growth is averaging 10 per cent over four years, when over \$2 billion is spent outside the budget process and when the Premier has no interest, as Mr Langouant pointed out back in 1998, in the budget process or making commitments that are funded in the context of the budget, we get these bills coming to Parliament—\$13.3 billion in authorisation of borrowings in the general government sector. Since 1987, the largest authorisation was \$390 million. There is 10 per cent expense growth. Let us not forget what the Treasurer used to say about expense growth averaging somewhere about seven per cent or eight per cent. It is averaging 10 per cent for \$2 billion outside the budget process. That is why commitments such as the Busselton airport, the Bunbury port, Roe Highway stage 8, Midland university, Midland trains and the Perth–Darwin highway still have no funding commitments attached to them, yet they are all commitments from the government. Time and again the Treasurer allocates the same pot of money for three different projects. Then there is the audacity of the Premier taking the \$700 million in mining tax money for the Gateway project and then spending taxpayer money to go to the High Court to challenge the validity of the mining tax.

Mr T.R. Buswell: That statement isn’t true.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Of course it is true!

Mr T.R. Buswell: There is not \$700 million of mining tax money in the Gateway project—you know that.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I think we all know that Gateway will happen only if the federal government, as it has said, contributes just under \$700 million—maybe the Treasurer is right; \$670 million—to the Gateway project. That is the only way it will happen, unless of course Mr Hockey gets his way and it becomes a toll road. If the Premier is going to say the Gateway is federally funded or at least take some money from the federal government, when it is crystal clear that money is coming from any money raised through the mining tax, he cannot then run off to the High Court and challenge the validity, and then assume that the money will still be there. If the Premier is successful, this government will somehow need to explain from where it will get that nearly \$700 million.

Time and again this government has made any promise it wants. It makes any promise in front of any audience on any particular day, and then walks away. The most stark and recent example is the Midland university. The people of Midland have already worked that out. When they went to the Premier and said, “What about the university?”—we were there at the speech—he said that the state is committed to funding the construction of a university campus, and the next week the Premier said he was only speaking in general terms and no commitments had been made.

The reality is that the opposition is applying a higher standard in respect of costing commitments than the government of the day. The National Party, as we know, is making commitments that have been exposed by Hon Norman Moore. Anything that the Liberal Party does is always subject to negotiation with the National Party. The Liberal Party has said it will spend royalties for regions on roads. The National Party said it is not spending one cent on roads in Western Australia, so the Liberal Party needs to decide that every time it announces a road funded by royalties for regions whether that will be negotiable or not. Is it a core road or is it a non-core road? Again, we will have another loan bill if this mob is re-elected. This one will not last terribly long, as they will rapidly eat up the authorisation contained in this loan bill.

I want to conclude on one reflection. The Loan Bill was introduced on the same day as the Western Australian Future Fund Bill, which in itself reflects the fact that the other issue the government has is the great moral challenge, as the former Treasurer said, of the future fund. We will leave this wonderful future fund that will create a revenue stream in 20 years so we can build half a school each year in 20 years. That is how wonderful it is going to be! Do members know what the best bit is? We will borrow the money to do it! We will borrow the money at 5.6 per cent to stick it in an account to earn 5.2 per cent. That is extraordinary! The first \$1 billion in

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seed capital that the government is putting in will lose \$30 million a year. This government keeps bringing in loan bills and borrowing to the hilt because it has no standards, no restrictions or no limits on the commitments that it makes around Western Australia.

MR A.P. O’GORMAN (Joondalup) [9.15 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the Loan Bill 2012. Before the dinner suspension, I was speaking about the failures of the Barnett government and was highlighting that a bill that we passed and which was proclaimed in December last year still has not come into effect because the regulations have not been drafted and completed. My colleague in the upper house Hon Kate Doust asked a question of Minister O’Brien. His answer was that it will be coming in by January. What a bad reflection! What a reflection on this government—that the party of small business, the party of business, passes a bill, and it takes it 12 months to bring in regulations to protect that small business constituency that it so valiantly treasures in this place, or so it says.

I will move on to talk about a couple of other issues that I was getting onto. I got on the freeway this morning at Shenton Avenue, and by the time I got to Hodges Drive, I had come to a standstill. By the time I got to Ocean Reef Road some 15 minutes later, I had to get off the freeway just to get to this place on time for a committee meeting with some victims of the Kelmscott fires, Margaret River fires and the Toodyay fires of our recent history. Over the time of this government, the freeway has gotten slower and slower and slower. We are at a point now where someone can get on a bike and ride from Joondalup to the city and, if they are fit, they can do it quicker than in a car. The member for Ocean Reef was over there madly interjecting saying that there were roadworks. Yes, there are roadworks. That is this week’s excuse. The truth of it is that this government has not planned for the northern suburbs. It has not taken into consideration the massive population growth. It is completely city-centric. It is completely focused on the city and building projects that really will not deliver anything for the people of the northern suburbs. Will people from the northern suburbs be able to come in or will they come in to Elizabeth Quay, as it has been dubbed by the Premier? Probably not. Why? It is because it will take us an hour to get here and an hour to get home in the traffic. The alternative is that we can jump on a train—fantastic!—but the chances are we will have to stand, because there will not be any room on the trains because they are so packed.

Prior to the last election, both sides of politics spoke passionately about extending the freeway to Hester Avenue. We still have not seen any plans or anything in the budget aimed at extending the freeway to Hester Avenue. The effect of extending it to Hester Avenue is that the freeway passes mostly through national park from Burns Beach Road up to Neerabup Road until the next stop up, which is Clarkson railway station. Most of it is going through national park. There is not a lot to be done by way of talking to people in that area to see if we can build noise walls and things like that. The suburb of Kinross is to the west of it but when people bought into that suburb, they knew that freeway was going to go up the side of it and noise walls would be built. At the time of the last Labor government we moved the rail line from the extreme west of the freeway reserve into the middle of the freeway reserve, setting it up for future expansion. Despite the efforts of the member for Ocean Reef and other candidates for northern suburbs electorates prior to the last election, today we have nothing. That has caused problems for people in my electorate—the people who back onto Burns Beach Road who are subjected to excruciating noise at all hours of the day and night. They tell me it starts from about four o’clock in the morning with trucks heading towards the freeway or away from the freeway. The spot I am talking about is the large roundabout at the intersection of Burns Beach Road and Joondalup Drive right up to the freeway. The first part of it is uphill and the trucks have to power up, so it is very noisy for people who back onto Burns Beach Road. If the freeway had gone through to Hester Avenue and connected with Neerabup Road, as is the intention, we could have reduced some of that truck movement from Burns Beach Road. That would have allowed Flynn Drive to be realigned so it was straight and there would be a more direct access or connection with Wanneroo Road, which also needs an upgrade to a dual carriageway.

Earlier tonight the member for Wanneroo spoke about the money that had been given by this government. He had a bit of a dig at the City of Wanneroo because it has not spent that money. I think he said it has not spent it for the past 12 months. I think the reason it does not want to spend the money is because it sees the benefit of realigning Flynn Drive and having it coming straight onto Wanneroo Road. We really need Wanneroo Road to be upgraded from a single lane in each direction to at least a dual carriageway with proper traffic treatments at the intersection of Flynn Drive, Neerabup Road and Wanneroo Road. That is what we need to happen on that road up there in the northern suburbs.

For many years—certainly for as long as I have been in this place—the RAC has conducted surveys around the state and provided information to all members of Parliament and ministers about what it terms risky roads. I do not think we have seen the full report yet; the RAC is still compiling it. I am hassling people at the RAC; namely, my daughter, who works there. I keep asking her when we are going to see this report and she tells me it is coming. She does not work directly in the area but she is well aware of it. The RAC sent a copy of each and